

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCNERNEY. Madam Speaker, behind me is a sign that has decorated the office doors of my Republican colleagues for the past few months. I agree with the sentiment and I thank the Capitol Police Officers for their heroic defense on January 6, and every day that they protect the seat of this Nation's government.

My problem is that 175 of my Republican colleagues, many who still have this sign on their doors, voted against an independent bipartisan commission to investigate the causes of the January 6 insurrection.

Capitol Police Officers suffered debilitating physical and mental trauma, and two lost their lives because of the events of that day. Unless we understand how this act of terror was accomplished and hold those who are responsible accountable for their actions, it could happen again.

So why did so many Republicans vote against the commission?

Because they are afraid of what could be found. They are afraid that it could affect their future elections.

This is hypocrisy at its ugliest. While Republicans in Congress pay lip service to the Capitol Police and their heroism, they are too cowardly to back a commission that would shed light on the terrorist attack that put the brave women's and men's lives in danger on that terrible day.

VETERANS DESERVE TIMELY SERVICE

(Mr. KELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KELLER. Madam Speaker, America's veterans have served our Nation honorably, and they deserve timely access to the benefits they have earned through their service.

The National Personnel Records Center was forced to scale down its operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is currently staffed at 25 percent capacity, well below the staffing level needed to process the estimated 5,000 records requests it receives on an average day. These service records are required for veterans to access medical benefits; adjudicate disability claims; and request a commendation, award, or regalia, such as a Purple Heart or campaign service medal.

To date, there is a backlog of half a million veterans' requests at the NPRC and, in some cases, veterans have waited for over a year for documentation. That is unacceptable.

That is why I introduced the Records Act, which would compel the NPRC to fully reopen, address the backlog, and develop a plan to prevent this from ever happening again.

These men and women were willing to lay down their lives in service to our Nation, and we need to continue working to ensure our veterans get the level of responsiveness from their government that they deserve.

DISCLOSE WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

(Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Madam Speaker, I am proud to cosponsor an amendment to H.R. 1187, a bill that would increase transparency of publicly traded companies to disclose workplace harassment cases, and I am pleased to see this amendment passed in the House yesterday.

Workplace harassment is far too common, and the shareholders and customers of a company should know whether that company fosters a healthy work culture and that it allows its workers to thrive.

Up to six in seven women in the workplace report having experienced sexual harassment. Seven of 10 people of color report experiencing some form of verbal, racial, or ethnic harassment, and those who speak out usually face retaliation. This amendment would bring to light these forms of mistreatment and incentivize companies to prevent harassment in the workplace.

I thank Ms. FRANKEL for her leadership on H.R. 1187, and I encourage my colleagues to support this workplace improvement bill, as well as improving the quality of life.

HONORING THE VICTIMS OF THE MOTHER EMANUEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH SHOOTING

(Ms. MACE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MACE. Madam Speaker, June 17, 2015, was one of the darkest days in Charleston, South Carolina, history. Six years ago today, nine church members were gunned down by a white supremacist at Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Today I rise to honor the lives of those lost that day. South Carolina's African-American community showed enormous restraint and an outpouring of love during this time, even to the irredeemable; and today we stand together, wrapped in the pride of Charleston Strong.

So today I would like to recognize Reverend and State Senator Clementa Pinckney, Cynthia Hurd, Reverend Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, Tywanza Sanders, Ethel Lance, Susie Jackson, Depayne Middleton Doctor, the Reverend Daniel Simmons, and Myra Thompson.

You will always be remembered, and may you rest in peace.

CONTINUE THE FIGHT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

(Mr. BOWMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOWMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise with great excitement and joy in my heart that today Juneteenth will become a national holiday.

156 years after the end of slavery in this country, we will now, on an annual basis, reflect collectively and, hopefully, begin the process of truth and collective healing as a nation.

But I ask us that we must not stop here. We must continue to go forward to fight for racial justice because in many parts of our country it still exists in the form of housing discrimination and segregation, lack of access to healthcare, and wealth inequality.

It is so humbling to stand here as a Black man in America and take another step toward feeling whole in this country. But we must—we have to come together across party lines to do much more.

HONORING THE LIFE OF FOSTER FRIESS

(Mr. ALLEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege today to rise to honor the life of Foster Friess, an American patriot who was a warrior for conservative and Christian values.

Foster truly lived the American Dream. He started his own business that led to incredible success. But Foster leaves behind a legacy that is far greater than success, as his generosity impacted the lives of countless people.

His favorite Bible verse from Galatians: "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

To Foster and his wife, Lynnette, that verse was more than words; it was put into action daily. They were passionate about charitable giving and always looking for ways to lend their support to people in need.

He will be missed by many, and my prayers are especially with his wife, Lynnette, their 4 children and 15 grandchildren.

Foster's life glorified God, and his legacy will live on far beyond his years. We must all learn from his example.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DAVID SAUSSY

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember and honor former Chatham County Commissioner David Saussy of Savannah, Georgia, who passed away on May 19 at the age of 86.

Born the youngest of five children, David moved to Savannah in 1964, and lived the next 57 years in Ardsley Park.

All who knew David remember his Savannah smile and his proud expressions whenever he talked about Savannah's accomplishments. David's countless friends and family members consider him one of the most generous people they knew.

He was on the boards of the Chat-ham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless and the Coastal Center for Development Services, was a founding member of the St. David's Society of Savannah, and served two terms as a Republican County Commissioner.

I am thankful for the immense impact he had on the Savannah community, and I know his legacy will remain.

My thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends, and all who knew him during this most difficult time.

□ 0915

REPEALING THE AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST IRAQ RESOLUTION OF 2002

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 473, I call up the bill (H.R. 256) to repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 473, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 256

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REPEAL OF AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST IRAQ RESOLUTION OF 2002.

The Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (Public Law 107-243; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note) is hereby repealed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill shall be debatable for 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the chair and the ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs or their respective designees.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 256.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 256. Let me start off by thanking my very good friend and part-

ner, BARBARA LEE, the author of this bill. I am proud to stand with her in her unyielding quest to repeal the 2002 AUMF, and I congratulate her early on for working so hard for over 20 years to get this done.

Nineteen years ago, as a junior Member of Congress, I faced one of the most consequential decisions of my career as an elected official with the United States Congress. The drumbeats of war were reverberating throughout Capitol Hill as the Bush administration prepared to invade Iraq. After carefully considering all the evidence before us, including unanswered questions about post-Saddam Iraq, I cast my vote against authorizing military force against the Hussein regime.

But our vote this morning to repeal the 2002 AUMF is not about relitigating our past. Rather, repealing this outdated authorization is about planning strategically for our future. It is about Congress reclaiming its constitutional obligation to weigh in on matters of war and peace.

On substance, the case for repealing the 2002 AUMF is unassailable. The 2002 AUMF would have no effect on any ongoing military operations in Iraq. The United States is not relying on the 2002 AUMF as the sole authority for any military operations. It has been used as an additional legal justification for strikes by Presidents from both parties but not as the sole authority for any strikes over the last decade. The Biden administration, in an unprecedented move, has announced support for the legislation we are moving today.

Repeal is crucial because the executive branch has a history of stretching the 2002 AUMF's legal authority. It has already been used as justification for military actions against entities that had nothing to do with Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist dictatorship, simply because such entities were operating in Iraq.

Given all of the countries active near Iraq today, including Turkey and Russia, the 2002 AUMF is vulnerable to being abused.

I have heard from my friend, the ranking member, Mr. MCCAUL, as well as other Members opposed to this legislation who expressed two concerns: one on the process, about the need for further briefings and conversations, and another on substance, about Iran-backed groups in Iraq.

On procedure, we should dispel ourselves of the fiction that this is a new issue. Congress has been debating what to do in a post-Saddam Iraq for 18 years, and our status of forces agreement expired in 2011. This has been a frontline issue for nearly two decades, and the House Foreign Affairs Committee moved this bill through regular order.

Regarding the concern about Iran-backed groups, let me once again reiterate that the 2002 AUMF was about removing the Hussein regime in Iraq. It had absolutely nothing to do with Iran. A decade and a half before the 2002

AUMF was passed, Iran and Iraq were fighting each other in a vicious war that lasted almost a decade.

If the President needs to strike these groups to defend our Nation, our diplomatic personnel, or our Armed Forces, he can do so under Article II of the Constitution. If any Armed Forces personnel on the ground need to defend themselves, they have the inherent right under unit self-defense principles.

Today, Congress has a historic opportunity to repeal this outdated authorization and reassert its proper authority over the solemn matters of war and peace.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCAUL. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank my good friend, Chairman MEEKS. We work well together. When we disagree, we do it civilly, and I think that is the way this body should operate. But I do disagree on this one.

I have said many times before that war should not be on autopilot. I do think this is an outdated AUMF, and I do believe that Congress needs to reclaim its war powers under Article I of the Constitution.

I also share the desire to repeal the 2002 AUMF, as well as the 2001 AUMF, but that must be part of a serious process to provide clear, updated authorities against the terrorists who still plot to kill Americans at home and abroad. I still hope to work toward that end with my respected friend, Chairman MEEKS, but a repeal and replacement should be simultaneous.

It is confusing to me that we are jamming through a standalone repeal without basic due diligence; without consulting the State Department, the Defense Department, or the intelligence community; without consulting the Government of Iraq and our coalition partners and allies.

In the 3 months since I made that complaint at our markup, the majority still has not scheduled a single briefing. This, in my judgment, is not a serious legislative process for the most serious issues that we face, and that is war and peace.

This feels like yet another political effort to undo one of President Trump's boldest counterterrorism successes: using the 2002 AUMF to remove Qasem Soleimani from the battlefield.

Soleimani was Iran's mastermind of terror for decades. He was responsible for the death of more than 600 Americans and wounded thousands more. He orchestrated the attack on our Baghdad Embassy. He plotted to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador on American soil here in D.C. He oversaw Iran's support for Assad, who killed hundreds of thousands in Syria. In short, America and the world are much safer with Qasem Soleimani gone.

While the 2002 AUMF was largely about Saddam Hussein, it also clearly